

I am Jane Mathew, and I have lived in Fargo for 37 years. I currently serve on the board for the Fargo Theater. I remember the first time I ever went to the Fargo Theater. We were invited by our neighbor, Dr. Blaine Amidon and his wife, Virginia, to go to a Silent Movie Night with them. I was overwhelmed the minute I walked in the door. The architectural style of this theater was like none other I had ever been in. I immediately fell in love with it.

Years later, I got involved with the Fargo Film Festival starting by just working the merchandise table. I enjoyed seeing the enthusiasm of real movie buffs who waited all year for the next festival. I was invited to be on a jury and from then on, I have been actively involved with the FFF and the theater. Movies that I had to review were coming in from all over the world. Film producers and directors made it a point to come to Fargo just to attend the festival. Since my first involvement with the festival, I have taken the opportunity to visit film festivals in other towns. The FFF rises above all others.

I continue to serve as a frequent volunteer usher at the theater, and I love it. I like to usher up in the balcony. I see many people coming upstairs just to catch a glimpse of what this piece of history really looks like from a bird's eye view. It's not just Fargoans coming to the Fargo Theater. The wonderful conversations and small world moments that I have experienced while ushering are many. People from all over the country come to see comedians, musical artists, plays, lectures and many more events held at the theater. This means they need a place to stay, rent a car, eat meals at local restaurants and more.

The Fargo Theater isn't just a building. It's a piece of Fargo history and an icon for downtown Fargo. It is a building located in Fargo, but it is recognized all across the state of North Dakota and the country. It can be seen in tourism ads encouraging visitors to check out what ND has to offer. As older buildings go, they always are in need of repair and some of those repairs are huge. Being a not-for-profit, resources have to be used wisely. Emily and her staff are very conscientious financially. The community is a great supporter of the theater, but more needs to be done. With the help of funding from the passing of this bill HB1438 and the opportunity to support a matching grant, families and friends can continue to enjoy the Fargo Theater for years to come.

SIDE NOTE: They have the very BEST popcorn. During Covid confinement, we ordered huge bags at a time just to enjoy it while watching a movie at home!!

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